



Social Studies Department Purpose

The Central Bucks School District Social Studies Department will develop students who use social studies understanding and skills to be self-directed learners, critical thinkers, and effective citizens in a globalized and democratic society.

Social Studies Teaching and Learning Principles^{*}

- Students of social studies need regular opportunities to investigate topics in depth and make meaning of their learning rather than “covering” content.
- The complexity of teaching social studies requires teachers to reflect on their practice and match knowledge of the discipline with appropriate teaching and assessing strategies to achieve learning goals.
- Social studies learning should be built on student’s prior knowledge of their lives and communities, rather than assuming they know nothing about the subject.
- Students need opportunities to demonstrate their strengths and exercise responsibility by choosing topics of interest for inquiry.
- Social studies teaching should involve exploration of questions that challenge student thinking and require problem solving about significant human issues.
- Students should be helped to connect American and global history, the history and culture of diverse social groups, and the community that surrounds them to their lives.
- To make concepts real, social studies should involve students in active participation and cooperative learning in the classroom and wider community.
- Social studies reading and thinking should include engaging real-world resources and technology beyond textbooks.
- Social studies should involve students in researching, analyzing, writing, discussing, and deliberating about authentic topics.
- Social studies assessments should reflect the importance of students’ thinking in the discipline, their preparation to be responsible citizens and ability to transfer learning, rather than emphasizing memorization of decontextualized facts.

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Sources:
Bransford, John et.al. How People Learn. Washington: National Academy Press, 2000.
Expectations of Excellence. Washington: National Council for the Social Studies, 1994.
Zemelman, Steven et.al. Best Practice. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2005.